

To: The Honorable Stephanie A. Gallagher

United States District Judge

c/o Office of the Federal Public Defender

100 South Charles Street,

Tower II, 9th Floor

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

From:

Colby V. Currier

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[REDACTED]

Dear Judge Gallagher,

My name is Colby Currier. I worked for NSA for 53 years, 32 years as a full-time employee, and 21 years as a part time contractor. I retired in 2018. For these 53 years, I was cleared at the TS-SCI level and held many compartmented clearances.

During the 1990's, I was Chief of Z03 (the predecessor of the CEC) and got to know Mark Unkenholz very well as a brilliant, creative and security conscious subordinate. When I retired at the end of 1997, I returned to NSA as a part-time contractor, working in the CEC as well as the Security and Counterintelligence organization.

While in the CEC as a contractor, for much of this time I worked for Mark, who served as the Technical Director of the CEC. As was true of my relationship with Mark during the 1990's, he continued to demonstrate his very strong professional and personal qualities and was a true pleasure to work for. By this time, in recognition of his accomplishments, he had been promoted into the senior technical ranks of NSA and was widely respected throughout the technical community of NSA.

In his decision-making role as CEC Technical Director, Mark was always conscious of not only NSA policy, but also to the limits of US law and associated security limits. I would also like to draw attention to his mentorship and management of the activities of CEC members who frequently sought his guidance as they routinely considered very difficult problems. Mark also chaired several panels in the CEC that developed strategies for very complex issues.

As I have considered the personal impact of the prosecution on Mark, I know from my many years of working with him that he is devoted to NSA and its mission. Mark fought the charges against him for over 3 long years, trying in vain to have the charges against him dropped. His reputation is of paramount importance to him, and I know that he feels that his reputation has been stained forever.

As a former Chief Z03, I know that we lived (as did Mark) in a very high-risk environment, where the payoffs for NSA and The Nation were also very high. In this context, we were also VERY conscious of not ever violating any NSA rules or policy. My fear is that current and future members of the CEC will be deterred from taking those appropriate risks in pursuance of their professional duties.

Your Honor, please take this letter (and others that you receive) into consideration when you sentence Mark.

Thank you,

Colby Currier